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AUTHOR	Grubb, W. Norton
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ABSTRACT

Based on statistical research and interviews with students, educators, and employers, this book offers a comprehensive overview of the education and training of the mid-skilled labor force comprised of individuals having at least a high school diploma but less than a baccalaureate degree. Following prefatory materials, chapter 1 highlights the importance of the mid-skilled labor market to the U.S. economy and describes distinctive characteristics of its members. Chapter 2 discusses the educational pathways into the mid-skilled labor market, focusing on the role of two-year colleges in preparing this group, while chapter 3 presents data on the economic effects of sub-baccalaureate education, suggesting that individuals completing credentials can benefit substantially. Chapter 4 examines non-college, shorter term job training programs, suggesting that the benefits gained from these programs are small, and advocates a unified system of job training and educational programs. Chapter 5 reviews implications of the characteristics of mid-level workers for two-year college curricula, arguing for the integration of occupational, academic, and remedial instruction, while chapter 6 discusses possibilities for enhancing connections between community colleges and employers. Chapter 7 examines implications for public policy, arguing that the needs of the mid-level workforce have been neglected at the federal, state, and local levels. Finally, chapter 8 considers trends in student characteristics, institutional structures, and the labor market to clarify future needs. Contains 233 references and an index. (HAA)

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